IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of extending a communication test/measurement agent, comprising:

a) providing the ~~communication test/measurement~~ agent with a communication unit enabling communication between the agent and ~~built-in functionality to allow~~ a network test center ~~communication test/measurement system~~ or client via a network for operating ~~to generically communicate with and operate~~ the agent;

b) providing the agent with a plurality of communication interfaces, each communication interface for communicating with a different network; and

c) providing the ~~communication test/measurement~~ agent with built-in functionality to enable ~~allow~~ the agent to automatically recognize and dynamically incorporate a plurality of different interface-specific plugins that are specific to different types of communication interfaces and which enable the network test center or client ~~allow the communication test/measurement client or system~~ to initiate monitoring or testing of the different networks, and receive test/monitor data therefrom ~~communicate with the respective different types of communication interfaces~~.

2. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein step c) includes ~~the incorporating is done by~~ loading code of a plugin into the agent.

3. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein a plugin is recognized and incorporated after the ~~communication~~

~~test/measurement~~ agent has been deployed for communications test/measurement and without reprogramming the agent.

4. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein each ~~a~~ plugin communicates with an application program that drives the corresponding ~~a~~ communication interface ~~of the type corresponding to the plugin~~.

5. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the agent provides a basic API to the network test center or client ~~central communication test/measurement system~~ that is independent of any communication interfaces, and wherein the plugins extend the API for the respective types of interfaces.

6. (previously presented) A method according to claim 5, wherein one plugin for a particular type of communication interface allows communication with different communication interfaces of the particular type.

7. (original) A method according to claim 5, wherein an extensible language is used to communicate with the API, wherein a base set of commands of the extensible language corresponds to the built-in functionality, and wherein the recognizing and incorporating of a plugin further comprises extending the extensible language with additional verbs that are specific to the plugin.

8. (currently amended) A method of communication with a plurality of network analysis software, the method comprising:

sending a plurality of requests from a communication testing console to a communication agent for monitoring or testing a plurality of different networks;

receiving the requests at the agent;

directing ~~when~~ a first one of the requests ~~is directed~~ to a first communication interface, which enables communication with one of the plurality of different networks,

directing ~~handling~~ the first request to ~~with~~ a first plugin of the agent that is specific to the type of the first communication interface for monitoring or testing one of the plurality of different networks;

directing a second one of the requests to a second communication interface, which enables communication with another one of the plurality of different networks,

directing the second request to a second plugin of the agent that is specific to the type of the second communication interface for monitoring or testing the other one of the plurality of different networks; and

directing ~~when~~ a third ~~second~~ one of the requests is not directed to a communication interface, handling the third ~~second~~ request with a common generic portion of the agent.

9. (original) A method according to claim 8, wherein the plugin responds to the first one of the requests with a response received from an application program that drives the communication interface to which the first request is directed.

10. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein the

common generic portion of the agent handles the third ~~second~~ request by generating a response to the third ~~second~~ request.

11. (currently amended) A method of extending a communication agent that provides a communication point for a console of a communication test/measurement system, the method comprising:

deploying the communication agent, where the communication agent is deployed on a computing device comprising a plurality of communication interfaces for communicating with a plurality of different networks and communicates with the communication interfaces using a driver application program, and where the console programmatically accesses the agent and accesses the communication interfaces through the agent; and

after the deploying, making the deployed communication agent aware of a new communication interface by installing on the computing device plugin software that can handle commands specific to the new communication interface, where the agent self-recognizes the plugin software and self-integrates the plugin software, whereby the plugin software becomes part of the agent and enables ~~allows~~ the console to send commands to the new communication interface for monitoring or testing each of the different networks.

12. (currently amended) A communication test/measurement agent instantiated in a tangible, non-transitory storage medium, comprising:

built-in code to enable ~~allow~~ a central communication test/measurement system to ~~generically~~ communicate with and operate the agent; and

built-in code to enable ~~allow~~ the agent to automatically recognize and dynamically incorporate interface-specific plugins for monitoring or testing different networks, and that are specific to different types of communication interfaces, and which enable ~~allow~~ the network test/measurement system to communicate with the respective different types of communication interfaces for initiating monitoring or testing of the different networks, and for receiving monitor/test results.

13. (original) A communication/test measurement agent according to claim 12, further comprising an interface table comprising entries, wherein the agent adds an entry in the interface table to correspond to a new plugin which the agent has incorporated.

14. (currently amended) A communication/test measurement agent according to claim 13, wherein entries in the interface table identify a plugin for a type of communication interface and a corresponding communication interface of that type.

15. (currently amended) A machine-readable storage storing information enabling a network test/measurement agent to perform a process, the process comprising:

receiving and processing generic communications from a central communication test/measurement system to generically operate the network test/measurement agent; and

recognizing and dynamically incorporating into the network test/measurement agent interface-specific a plurality of plugins for monitoring or testing a plurality of different networks, and that are specific to different types of communication interfaces

and which allow the central communication test/measurement system to communicate with the respective different types of communication interfaces for initiating monitoring or testing of the different networks, and for receiving monitor/test results from the different networks.